

E L E G I E S.

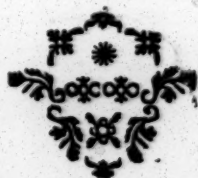
B Y

R O B E R T S C O T T.

—————Elegeia flebile Carmen :

Non facit ad Lachrymas Barbitos ulla meas.

OVID.



L O N D O N,

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E L E G Y I.

To V E N U S.

GAY *Venus*, gentle queen of soft desire,
Oft have I bended at thy sacred shrine;
Oft did my earnest vows of thee require,
(’Twas all I wish’d) to call my *Delia* mine.

But now the dear delusion charms no more;
I know thee deaf to my neglected pray’r :
Now ev’ry joy, and ev’ry hope, is o’er,
And all behind is sorrow and despair.

B

Why

Why should I longer seek, with useless care,
 The fragrant myrtle, and sweet-blushing rose?
 And why the garland for thy shrine prepare,
 Regardless as thou art of all my woes?

Why should I worship her who scorns my vow?
 And love the maid that does my love disdain?
 The giver of each tender pleasure thou,
 Yet all thou giv'st to me is grief and pain.

The venal lover wins, with easy art,
 His venal fair, or bears the loss unmov'd;
 While keenest anguish wounds the faithful heart,
 Or ill-requited, or in vain lov'd.

Yet good and gentle is my *Delia's* breast,
 As truth sincere, as melting pity kind:
 Not she, but Fate, forbids me to be blest.—
 To Fate true Wisdom ever is resign'd.

Farewel,

Farewel, ye pleasing hopes, ye soft desires ;
 Farewel, thou dearest cause of all my pain ;
 Farewel the tender song, which love inspires :
 For life's a cheat, and love itself is vain.

E L E G Y II.

On seeing two Larks that were shot.

SURE triple brass involv'd his cruel heart,
 Hard, and unfeeling of another's woe,
 Who mark'd you victims to his savage art,
 And saw your guiltless blood unpitied flow.

O'er him, while yet he in his cradle lay,
 With fond delight no happy parent hung ;
 Ne'er did his smiles a mother's pain repay,
 Nor gentle word drop from his lisping tongue.

His

His gloomy soul no fair idea charm'd ;
 To him was precious wisdom never dear ;
 His heart the love of virtue never warm'd ;
 For suff'ring worth he never shed a tear.

Nor felt the transports of refining love,
 Whose gen'rous power exalts the noble mind ;
 Nor friendship's heav'nly joys e'er did he prove ;
 His sordid views to his low self confin'd.

Unheard, at his inhospitable door
 Long might the wand'ring shiv'ring stranger stand ;
 Perish for him the needy and the poor ;
 For bounty never grac'd his impious hand.

And soft humanity he never knew,
 Nor social love could in his bosom dwell,
 From whose dire hand the fatal vengeance flew
 By which the hapless pair untimely fell.

No more, enliven'd by the genial spring,
 In gay excursions o'er your native plain
 Blythe shall you rove, or to the morning sing,
 And with your music cheer the village-swain.

No more amid the pleasing green retreat,
 Sacred to love, your lowly nest prepare,
 And, while affection makes each labour sweet,
 Tend your dear offspring with unwearied care.

Yet shall you live while lives my humble song.
 If not in vain your sorrows I relate,
 Perhaps some gentle breast may feel your wrong,
 And with a tender sigh lament your fate.

E L E G Y III.

To *N A R C I S S A*.

WHILE vernal airs inspire each tuneful tongue,
 Wilt thou, *Narcissa*, graciously attend?
 And while I strive to please thee with my song,
 With kind indulgence listen to thy friend?

If thou art pleas'd, 'tis all that I desire;
 Well shall thy joy repay the muse's toil:
 Applauds the world, or not, I'll ne'er enquire;
 Enough to me thy sweet approving smile.

With beauty cloath'd, again the jocund spring
 O'er the blest fields her mildest influence sheds;
 The west-wind lightly waves his downy wing,
 And flowers unnumber'd purple o'er the meads.

In

In pride of youth exults the jovial year;
 Again the groves put on their robes of green;
 Again the pleasant woodland song we hear,
 And nature in her fairest form is seen.

Along the banks of the wild-warbling stream,
 With many an herb adorn'd, and fragrant flow'r,
 Cheer'd by the setting sun's inspiring beam,
 Oft-wand'ring I enjoy the peaceful hour.

The solemn scenes dispose the tranquil breast,
 To serious musing and to thought refin'd;
 And contemplation comes, a heavenly guest!
 And pours out all her blessings on the mind.

Nor when the gentle sov'reign of the night,
 Illumes with modest ray th'etherial blue,
 Will I decline to hail her sober light,
 As with soft steps I print th'ambrosial dew.

Let memory then recall some tuneful page,
 And warm the soul with extasy divine;
 Or let the moral thought my heart engage,
 And wisdom's pure immortal joys be mine.

Devote to wisdom is the hour of Eve;
 She triumphs when the world sinks down to rest;
 The faithless passions then no more deceive;
 The cares of day no more distract the breast.

But ah! while all around is joy and peace,
 Why heaves my bosom with that tender sigh?
 Why faints my longing heart? and why not cease
 The tears to fall spontaneous from my eye?

What wants there to adorn the happy year?
 And what to charm the anxious soul to rest?
 Alas! my dear *Narcissa* is not here:
 Tell me, ye lovers, can I then be blest?

For

For thee, lov'd maid, I sigh, and wish in vain;
 To thy dear name attune the plaintive lay:
 In vain does beauty purple o'er the plain;
 In vain the flow'rs are sweet, the groves are gay.

No more the glowing scene my bosom warms;
 No more the vernal song delights my ear;
 Thy absence throws a veil o'er nature's charms,
 And lessens every glory of the year.

Short and uncertain is our ev'ry joy;
 Oft transient pleasure ends in lasting woe:
 Hence from the friend's, and from the lover's eye,
 The lustre fades, the tears incessant flow.

Is there a blessing that I yet can taste?—
 Let happiness for-ever wait on thee:
 Be ever gracious, and be ever blest;
 Be ever kind, and, oh! remember me.

D

E L E G Y

E L E G Y IV.

On the Death of General W O L F E.

Dulce & decorum est pro Patria mori. HOR.

ON yonder plain, what awful form appears,
 Her temples with triumphal garlands bound!
 From her bright eyes why flow the copious tears?
 Why, sad and thoughtful, looks she on the ground?

'Tis *Britain's* genius—O'er her fallen son,
 Dissolv'd in grief, the lovely mourner stands;
 Forgets the glory by the hero won,
 And with vain tears his precious life demands.

Low in the dust the graceful warrior lies;
 Cold is that breast which glow'd with martial flame;
 Eternal slumber seals his weary'd eyes;
 No more they sparkle with the hopes of fame.

Ah!

Ah ! what avails thee, number'd with the dead,
 That fair ambition which thy soul did move ?
 Now life, with all its transient joys, is fled,
 The charms of glory, and the sweets of love.

From death's rude hand could valour save the brave,
 O *Wolfe* ! thy country should not mourn thy fate :
 Could patriot virtue rescue from the grave,
 The muse should not with tears thy doom relate.

Yet mid the tears that wet thy sacred tomb,
 Let her well-pleased, in strains of triumph, tell,
 Tho' snatch'd from life while in its fairest bloom,
 None ever liv'd too short who dy'd so well.

Long shall *Britannia* weeping speak thy fame,
 Thy early fall the good and brave shall mourn,
 And, ever grateful to thy honour'd name,
 Pour out their pious sorrows o'er thy urn.

When

* When ages hence this song is known no more,
 Who haply walk among the mighty dead,
 Shall say, while they thy noble fate deplore,
 And with soft steps the hallow'd mould they tread :

“ *Britannia*'s brave avenger here is laid :
 “ Obsequious to his injur'd country's call,
 “ For he fought, he conquer'd, and he bled :
 “ Great in his life, and glorious in his fall.”

* When this Elegy was written, it was said General *Wolfe* was to be buried in *Westminster-Abbey*.

E L E G Y

E L E G Y V.

To *DELIA*.

A GAIN returns the ever-pleasant spring :
 Ye opening flow'rs, your glowing charms disclose :
 Ye lilies sweet, perfume the zephyr's wing :
 And breathe thy odours round, gay blushing rose.

How richly fragrant is the vernal air,
 That softly wanders o'er the blooming plain !
 The woods how lovely, and the fields how fair !
 How pleas'd and happy looks the jovial swain !

The chearful lark, up-soaring to the skies,
 By love instructed, chaunts the sprightly song ;
 And hear the universal hymn arise
 From the glad hearts of all the tuneful throng.

E

Blythely

Blythely exulting o'er the rising mound,
 The wanton lambs with emulation play;
 Or mark with many a ring the verdant ground,
 While fingering by them, sits the shepherd gay.

To bounteous *Pan* he tunes the grateful reed,
 By whose kind pow'r his fruitful flocks are blest;
 Or of its flow'rs he spoils the fragrant mead,
 To deck his rural love's devoted breast.

O come, my *Delia*, to my longing arms,
 And bless my heart with pleasures all divine:
 The happy muse shall sing thy heav'nly charms;
 The fairest garland of the year be thine.

E L E G Y

E L E G Y VI.

On WESTMINSTER-ABBAY.

WHILE others gayly waste the jovial day,
 With song and dance the festive hours beguile;
 Let me pursue my solitary way,
 Where wisdom leads, to yonder sacred pile. —

The painted windows shed a feeble light;
 The parting sun now gives his latest ray;
 And now approaches sober-suited Night,
 And forth before her sends the twilight gray.

Heav'ns! what a solemn scene appears around!
 How deep the silence, and how still the air!
 Softly, O softly tread the hallow'd ground:
 A voice from yonder tomb, methinks, I hear.

“ Wel-

“ Welcome, it says, to wisdom’s calm retreat
 “ Are all who wisdom’s sacred charms adore ;
 “ Here rest the ashes of the wise and great :
 “ Look round, consider, and be vain no more.”

These trophies sad, in mournful pomp display’d,
 Speak to the heart with energy divine :
 How many here low in the dust are laid,
 That once in life illustrious wont to shine ?

For neither youth nor beauty, wealth nor pow’r,
 From the destructive hand of death can save ;
 Nor wisdom shun the dark and dismal hour,
 Nor virtue keep her vot’ries from the grave.

Imperial grandeur, like the rest, must bear
 The common fate impos’d on all mankind ;
 The scepter’d monarch rests unenvy’d here,
 His lifeless form to kindred dust consign’d.

The

The fons of glory here are laid to sleep,
 Who rul'd the battle on the martial plain;
 Or who with *Britain's* thunder aw'd the deep,
 And rode triumphant o'er the subject main.

Nor absent those whom sacred wisdom led
 Thro' Nature's boundless range, and to their view
 The wonders of a thousand worlds display'd,
 And charm'd their search with glories ever new.

Beneath that honour'd tomb does *Newton* lie,
 On whom bright Science beam'd her purest ray;
 Who search'd the laws that bind the worlds on high,
 And trac'd thro' Æther's depth the comet's way.

Here o'er their lifeless fons the muses weep;
 No longer *Milton* breathes the heav'nly song;
Shakespeare's sweet voice is lost in endless sleep,
 And cold and mute is *Pope's* harmonious tongue.

No more is heard soft *Spencer's* magic strain;
 Now ceases *Prior's* easy wit to flow;
 No longer *Thomson* sings the rural swain,
 Nor tender *Otway* * tells the tale of woe.

Their song was pleasant to the list'ning ear,
 As to the vernal flow'rs, the genial ray;
 But all too weak to stop Death's fierce career,
 Who hears unmov'd the soul-enchanting lay.

Yet triumphs o'er his pow'r th'immortal mind;
 The muse's page transmits to lasting fame
 With arts, or arms, who bless'd or fav'd mankind;
 And living honours shall adorn his name.

* The Author has been guilty of inadvertency. *Pope* and *Otway* have no monuments in the abbey; but it is not wonderful that their names should present themselves here, nor could he afterwards think of striking them out.

E L E G Y VII.

To M E L A N C H O L Y.

FROM thy green bow'r, beneath the sylvan shade
 Of darkest gloom, thy ever-peaceful seat,
 Come, sober Melancholy, heav'nly maid!
 And gracious deign to visit my retreat.

From the deep murmurs of the falling stream
 A while withdraw thy fondly-list'ning ear;
 Or on the flow'ry bank thy rapt'rous dream
 A while suspend, my solemn verse to hear.

O come, sweet mistress of my humble song!
 And warm my bosom with thy charms divine:
 To thee alone my serious strains belong;
 My numbers and myself are only thine.

I do not claim thee without title due,
 My sov'reign queen, my patroness, and guide ;
 For thou, when first this vital air I drew,
 Didst o'er my hapless natal hour preside.

Come with thy sober smiles, and modest grace ;
 Thy mildly-beaming eye, and pensive air :
 Shew me the glories of thy lovely face ;
 For, Oh ! what beauty is by half so fair ?

Heart-wasting envy, and corroding care,
 And guilty fear, and ev'ry low desire,
 And gloomy sorrow, and abhorr'd despair,
 Far from thy pleasant haunt bid those retire.

But in thy train let Innocence appear,
 In purest white array'd, and all-serene,
 Let sweetly-smiling Cheerfulness be there,
 And with her influence bless the solemn scene.

Let

Let Contemplation stretch her eagle wing,
 Piercing and keen her heav'n-directed eye;
 Let kind Benevolence her transports bring,
 And soft Compassion breathe the tender sigh.

And let the sisters of the sacred hill,
 Daughters of *Jove*, immortal and divine!
 With all their harmonies, attend thee still.
 While such thy train, O make me wholly thine!

G

E L E G Y

E L E G Y VIII.

In the Manner of TIBULLUS.

LET him whose soul the love of glory charms,
Purchase in fields of death immortal fame ;
Be his, when worn with toil, and old in arms,
The victor's laurel, and the honour'd name.

Me, unambitious of the noble strife,
Let rural ease infold with soft embrace ;
Let me in calm retirement lead my life,
Amid the joys of innocence and peace.

Let him whom gold inflames with low desire,
The precious mischief seek o'er land and sea :
Should he the utmost of his wish acquire,
Is he more happy, more content than me ?

Does

Does sleep with gentler slumber seal his eyes ?
 Or fancy blest him with more pleasant dreams ?
 Or does the morn with rudder glory rise,
 And round his head diffuse her fairer beams ?

Or does the radiant sov'reign of the day,
 With a diviner goodness warm his breast ?
 With sweeter influence drive his cares away ?
 And pleas'd behold him more completely blest ?

Lay me inglorious in the lowly shade ;
 The dear delights of gentle love be mine :
 With soft devotion duly shall be paid
 My ardent vows at *Cytherea's* shrine.

And should the gracious queen my suit approve,
 And give my dear *Narcissa* to my arms,
 Glory and wealth, well are ye lost for love ;
 And well repaid by beauty's heavenly charms.

F I N I S.



